



Indiana Department of Education
SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

GRANT NOTICE

TO: Interested Vendors

FROM: Dawn McGrath, Coordinator of Special Education

DATE: October 20, 2009

SUBJECT: Grant Notice for the Establishment of Indiana Resource Centers for Improvement Activities

GENERAL INFORMATION

I.1 Award Type

Discretionary Grant

I.2 Purpose

The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) is seeking entities that may be interested in applying for the grant opportunity to assist the State in implementing Indiana Resource Centers for Improvement Activities (INRCIAs). INRCIAs will assist local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools in reforming and improving their supports and services for children with disabilities in order to meet the unique needs of these students and to improve their educational outcomes. It is the intent of the IDOE to award a total of six (6) grants to entities that have the ability to provide high-quality services to fulfill this purpose and the scope of work described in Section I.4.

I.3 Priority

In accordance with 34 CFR § 300.704(b)(4) and CDFA #84.323A, the priority of INRCIAs originates from the required and allowable activities specified in the statute of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) in alignment with the vision and priorities of the IDOE.

I.4 Scope of Work

In 2004, the United States Congress reauthorized the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004). IDEA 2004 requires the United States Secretary of Education to monitor states in three priority areas, including: the provision of a free and public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environments (LRE), general supervision, and disproportionate representation; this monitoring is done through consideration of 20 indicators [see 20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(A)-(C)]. Additionally, pursuant to IDEA 2004, each state must submit monitoring reports in the form of a State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR) that evaluate the State's efforts to implement the requirements and purposes of Part B of IDEA 2004 and describe how the State will improve such implementation.

The SPP can be found at:

http://www.doe.in.gov/exceptional/speced/docs/Indiana_Part_B_SPP.pdf.

The APR can be found at:

http://www.doe.in.gov/exceptional/speced/docs/Part_B_School_Year_07_08_APR.pdf.

As part of the SPP, States must outline Improvement Activities for the purposes of improving educational results for children with disabilities. This Grant Notice welcomes submissions of grant applications to assist schools and local educational agency-based through technical assistance in the form of Indiana Resource Centers for Improvement Activities (INRCIAs).

A single entity will be identified as the recipient of each of the six (6) INRCIA grant awards (listed below) and may propose to subcontract with another entity in order to provide the services throughout the State. The applicant is responsible for the performance of any obligations that may result from any subcontract initiated by the applicant, and shall not be relieved of obligation to meet the goals of the grant due to inadequate performance of any subcontractor. More than one INRCIA grant award may be awarded to any given entity based on the merits of the applications submitted to IDOE. Please note that if an applicant intends to apply for more than one grant category, separate grant applications must be submitted to the IDOE for each of the categories for which the applicant is applying. One INRCIA grant will be awarded in each of the following categories:

- Positive Behavior Supports
- Transition to Adulthood
- Effective and Complaint Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
- Effective Assessment and Instruction
- Effective Evaluations
- Autism

It is the expectation of the IDOE that INRCIA grant recipients will comply with the following requirements:

- Provide improvement activities and professional development materials intended to correct identified deficiencies or prevent potential systematic insufficiencies related to educating students with special needs;
- Integrate, to the extent possible, technical solutions and data collection procedures with software already in place at the IDOE;
- Provide training modules to be delivered through the IDOE website;
- Collaborate with other INRCIA sites and the IDOE for statewide coordination to assure statewide coverage to address required improvement activities;
- Provide quarterly reports to the IDOE, as requested;

- Contribute to the knowledge base on effective systems change and instruction practice related to students with special needs; and
- Inventory all equipment and/or software purchased under the INRCIA grant as property of the IDOE.

It is the expectation of the IDOE that INRCIA grant recipients will comply with the following requirements for each of the categories for which the applicant is applying:

Positive Behavior Supports

- Comply with the Project Goals and Objectives already established by the IDOE in the SPDG application <http://www.doe.in.gov/exceptional/speced/whatsnew.html>; and
- Have the capacity to respond to statewide assignments from the IDOE to intervene with selected LEAs based on Indicators 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10.

Transition to Adulthood

- Have the capacity to successfully respond to statewide assignments from the IDOE to intervene with selected LEAs based on Indicator 1, 2, 13 and 14 data;
- Provide technical assistance statewide to LEAs and schools to support compliant transition IEPs; and
- Provide best practices professional development statewide to LEAs and schools to support effective post-school outcome preparation.

Effective and Compliant IEPs

- Provide best practices professional development statewide around ISTART7;
- Act as a statewide resource to schools and LEAs for Article 7 compliance; and
- Have the capacity to successfully respond to statewide assignments from IDOE to intervene with selected LEAs and schools based on any pattern of noncompliance including results from Indicator 8, 16, 17, 18, and 19 data.

Effective Assessment and Instruction

- Act as a statewide resource LEAs and schools for supporting state testing decisions and the use of resulting test data;
- Provide best practices professional development statewide concerning ISTEP+ accommodations, ISTAR, ISTAR-KR and the Modified ISTEP+ and work with the IDOE Assessment Division to provide accurate information;
- Act as a statewide resource to LEAs and schools on the accessibility of instruction, Universal Design for Learning, and differentiated instruction while working with IDOE staff to coordinate this information; and
- Have the capacity to successfully respond to statewide assignments from the IDOE to intervene with selected LEAs and schools based on Indicator 3, 5, 6 and 7 data.

Effective Evaluations

- Provide best practices professional development statewide concerning the initial evaluation and reevaluation processes; and
- Demonstrate the capacity and knowledge to respond to statewide assignments from the IDOE to intervene with selected LEAs and school based on Indicator 11 and 12 data.

Autism

- Support and participate on the Autism Commission and related work groups; and
- Provide expertise and serve as a statewide resource for school personnel in supporting students with autism.

1.5 Eligible Entities

All entities, including but not limited to universities and non-for-profit and for-profit agencies, are eligible to apply for this grant opportunity so long as the entity has the capacity and expertise to provide the needed services throughout the State. The IDOE will give strong preference to Indiana-based agencies.

1.6 Estimated Average Award:

\$1,000,000 annually, if federal funding is available

1.7 Estimated Number of Awards:

Six (6)

The term of contract shall be for a period of nineteen (19) months from the date of the contract execution. The 19 month period will consist of a seven (7) month implementation period and Year 1 of the Project. There may be three (3) one-year renewals for a total of four (4) years and 7 months, at the State's discretion.

1.8 Contract Effective Dates:

<u>Project Implementation:</u>	January 1, 2010 – September 30, 2010
<u>Project Year 1:</u>	October 1, 2010 – September 30, 2011
<u>Project Year 2 (pending contract renewal):</u>	October 1, 2011 – September 30, 2012
<u>Project Year 3 (pending contract renewal):</u>	October 1, 2012 – September 30, 2013
<u>Project Year 4 (pending contract renewal):</u>	October 1, 2013 – September 30, 2014

1.9 Application Due Date: November 30, 2009

Interested entities that have the capacity to meet the needs of Indiana by providing high-quality services related to these requirements are invited to submit a proposal for the scope of work described in Section 1.4.

For questions regarding this grant opportunity, please contact Kim Clement, Special Projects Liaison. Please note that questions will not be answered on an individual basis. Rather, questions will be answered in an FAQ document that will be posted to the Indiana Department of Education Special Education website weekly until November 24, 2010 (<http://www.doe.in.gov/exceptional/speced/whatsnew.html>). See Section 2.3 (Technical Assistance) for more details regarding submitting questions.

APPLICATION PROCESS

2.1 Summary of Grant Application Timelines:

Activity	Date
Applications Available	October 23, 2009*
Informational Meeting	October 29, 2009 10:00 a.m. EDT
Deadline for Transmittal of Applications	November 30, 2009 4:30 p.m. EST
Date of Approval Status Notifications	January 1, 2010
Date of Final Award Notifications	February 1, 2010

*Grant applications will be available by the close of business on October 23, 2009 at: <http://www.doe.in.gov/exceptional/speced/whatsnew.html>.

2.2 Application Requirements

- All portions of this grant application must be fully addressed.
- Applicants must submit one grant application via e-mail to Kim Clement at kclement@doe.in.gov for *each* category for which the applicant is applying.
- Part II of applications must be double-spaced with no smaller than one-inch margins.
- Part II of applications must be submitted in 12-point Times New Roman font and the application narrative may not exceed 25 pages.
- Where appropriate, supporting documentation may be referenced by a page and paragraph number. If supporting documentation is referenced, the narrative of the technical proposal must contain a meaningful summary of the referenced material.
- Citations must be in APA format.
- Applicants must sign the Assurances Page at the end of the application. The original, signed assurances must be mailed to the IDOE. Assurances may not be e-mailed or faxed.

Any application that fails to meet any of the above requirements will not be reviewed and the applicant will be notified on January 1, 2010 that grant application was denied due to failure to comply with application requirements.

2.3 Technical Assistance

In order to ensure the transparency of the application process, applicants have two options for receiving technical assistance (listed below).

E-mail: In order to ensure that no applicant(s) has an unfair advantage over another, applicants may submit questions regarding the application process via e-mail from October 23, 2009 – November 20, 2009. All questions should be e-mailed to Kim Clement at:

kclement@doe.in.gov.

- No responses will be sent to requestors directly. All questions will be answered weekly in an FAQ document.
- All questions received by the close of business each Friday from October 23, 2009 – November 20, 2009, will be answered in an FAQ document by the close of business on the following Tuesday. The FAQ document can be found at:
<http://www.doe.in.gov/exceptional/speced/whatsnew.html>.
- Before submitting a question, applicants are encouraged to review the FAQ document each week because the question may have already been answered.
- All questions must be submitted by the close of business on Friday, November 20, 2009. Questions received after this time will not be answered.
- IDOE will not provide technical assistance via individual phone calls. Any questions emailed after 4:30 p.m. EST November 20, 2009 will not be answered. No exceptions will be made.

Informational Meeting: An informational meeting will be held at the IDOE for all entities interested in applying for an INRCIA grant. The purpose of the informational session is geared toward sharing information with interested entities and disseminating information and answering any questions that interested entities may have regarding the grant opportunity or application in order to assure the best possible grant application responses.

The informational meeting will be held at the IDOE on Thursday, October 29, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. in the Riley Room conference room. The IDOE is located at:

151 W. Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

All attendees will be responsible for their own parking. A list of parking garages can be found at:
http://www.indydt.com/parking_results.cfm.

Attendees are strongly encouraged to e-mail Kim Clement at kclement@doe.in.gov if they will be attending the informational meeting.

2.4 Submission of Applications

Applications must be **received** by the Indiana Department of Education, via e-mail, by 4:30 p.m. EST on November 30, 2009. Faxed applications will not be accepted.

Applications must be e-mailed to:

Kim Clement
kclement@doe.in.gov

Assurances must be mailed to:

Kim Clement
Indiana Department of Education
Division of Differentiated Learners
ATTN: INRCIA Assurances
151 W. Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Caution to Applicants about Shipping/Mailing: It is the responsibility of the applicant to make sure that INRCIA grant application assurances are received by the IDOE's Division of Differentiated Learners on or before the designated time and date. The IDOE, Division of Differentiated Learners' clock is the official time for all solicitation submissions.

Any costs associated with the mailing of grant assurances are the responsibility of the applicant. The State accepts no obligations for costs incurred by applicants in anticipation of being awarded a grant.

2.5 Final Submission

Once an application is received by the IDOE, no part of any grant applicant's application may be changed. All applications submitted to IDOE are considered final with no exception.

2.6 Confidential Information

Applicants are advised that materials contained in proposals are subject to the Access to Public Records Act (APRA), IC 5-14-3 *et seq.*, and, after the contract award, the entire RFP file may be viewed and copied by any member of the public, including news agencies and competitors. Applicants claiming a statutory exception to the APRA must place all confidential documents (including the requisite number of copies) in a sealed envelope clearly marked "Confidential." The applicant must also specify which statutory exception of APRA that applies. The State reserves the right to make determinations of confidentiality. If the applicant does not identify the statutory exception, the IDOE will not consider the submission confidential. If the State does not agree that the information designated is confidential under one of the disclosure exceptions to APRA, it may seek the opinion of the Public Access Counselor. Prices are not confidential information.

2.7 Evaluation of Grant Applications

Grant applications will be evaluated based upon the proven ability of the applicant to provide high-quality services for the scope of work described in Section 1.4. Each part of the evaluation

process is described below with a brief explanation of the bases for and method of evaluation in that part.

Step	Description
Step One	Preliminary Review (Pass/Fail)
Step Two	External Application Evaluation
Step Three	Fourth Evaluator (if applicable)
Step Four	Presentation and Interview Sessions

All grant applications will be evaluated using the following approach.

2.7.1 Step One: Preliminary Review

In this step, applications will be evaluated only to ensure that the applicant has adhered to the Application Requirements (see Section 2.2). All grant applications will undergo a preliminary review by IDOE staff. The preliminary review will only serve to ensure that the applicant has adhered to the Application Requirements. Any application that does not adhere to the Application Requirements will be disqualified. Upon preliminary review, the IDOE reviewer will sign off on the application and indicate whether the applicant has passed or has failed to meet Application Requirements. No points are awarded to any part of any grant application during the Preliminary Review stage of the evaluation process.

All applications that have failed preliminary review will be disqualified and applicants will be notified no later than January 1, 2010.

2.7.2 Step Two: External Application Evaluation

The grant applications that meet the Application Requirements will be evaluated by objective, subject-matter experts who are external to the IDOE. In order to ensure that grant applications are reviewed objectively, applications will not be reviewed by IDOE staff members. All external evaluators must sign an Individual Acknowledgement to Serve on Evaluation Team form before review. The Individual Acknowledgement to Serve on Evaluation Team states that the evaluator will comply with the following:

- Maintain confidentiality of all contents of all grant applications;
- Maintain confidentiality of all standards, ratings, or scores used during the evaluation process;
- Maintain confidentiality of the names of all evaluation team members; and
- Ensure that he/she has no direct or indirect financial interest in any of the potential grant awards.

Three (3) external evaluators will review and score each grant application. Evaluators will provide scores for each response in the application using the Scoring Standards, which can be found at: <http://www.doe.in.gov/exceptional/speced/whatsnew.html>. Grant evaluators will utilize Evaluator Scoring Criteria while evaluating grant applications. The Evaluator Scoring Criteria will help ensure that all grant applications are evaluated consistently and with equal care. Copies of the Evaluator Scoring Criteria will be posted in the upcoming weeks to the following website: <http://www.doe.in.gov/exceptional/speced/whatsnew.html>.

After three (3) external evaluators have given scores to a grant application, the IDOE will review and average the 3 evaluators' total scores. The top two (2) applicants with the highest scores in each category will be contacted by IDOE to schedule a Presentation and Interview Session. See section 2.7.4 (Presentation and Interview Session) for more details.

2.7.3 Step Three: Fourth Evaluator

In the event that one (1) of the 3 evaluators' scores is more or less than 10 points of the other two (2) scores, a fourth external evaluator will be called upon to review and score the grant application. Upon receipt of all 4 scores, the outlier will be discarded and the remaining 3 scores will be averaged to determine the preliminary final score.

2.7.4 Step Four: Presentation and Interview Session

The top 2 applicants with the highest score in each category will be contacted by IDOE to schedule a Presentation and Interview Session. During this time, two individuals may represent the applicant. The 2 individuals will have the opportunity to give a 20 minute presentation to a board of objective, external evaluators. The board of evaluators will consist of individuals external to the IDOE. After an applicant's 20 minute presentation, the board of evaluators will have an opportunity to ask the applicant follow-up questions. Once all questions have been answered, the Presentation and Interview Session will end.

The board of evaluators will determine which grant applicant is of higher merit. In the event that the board of evaluators determines that both grant applicants are of the same merit and have the same ability to implement the purposes of the grant, the applicant with the lowest cost will be awarded the grant.

A total of six (6) grants will be awarded.

2.8 Scoring

The grant application consists of three (3) Parts, two (2) of which will be scored. A summary of application parts are described, below.

Part	Description	Points
One	Applicant Information	Not scored
Two	Application Narrative - general	60
Three	Application Narrative – INRCIA category specific	Embedded throughout application
Four	Presentation and Interview Session	Grant recipient determined by board of evaluators

Part One of the INRCIA grant application will not be scored. Parts Two and Three of the grant application will be scored by external evaluators. See Sections 2.7.2 and 2.7.3 (External Application Evaluation and Fourth Evaluator) for more information.

All applicants that pass Parts Two and Three of the application will be contacted by IDOE in order to fulfill the requirements of Part Four of the application process. See section 2.7.4 (Presentation and Interview Session) for more details.

2.9 Approval Status Notifications

The top two (2) applicants with the highest scores in each category will be contacted by IDOE to schedule a Presentation and Interview Session. See section 2.7.4 (Presentation and Interview Session) for more details.

Based upon preliminary final scores, all applicants will be notified of their status by January 1, 2010. All notifications will be given in writing and any information regarding status will not be given via any other form of communication. Inquiries of status will not be accepted before January 1, 2010. Decisions regarding approval status are final and decisions cannot be appealed. IDOE will not negotiate or revise reviewer comments or scores.

All applicants that participated in a Presentation and Interview Session will be notified of the selection results by February 1, 2009. All notifications will be given in writing and any information regarding approval status will not be given via any other form of communication. Inquiries of selection results will not be accepted before February 1, 2010. Decisions regarding final selection results are final and decisions cannot be appealed. IDOE will not negotiate or revise the board of evaluator's decisions.

EVALUATION OF FUNDED PROJECTS

3.1 Evaluation by IDOE

All grant recipients will be monitored by IDOE to ensure that the goals and scope of the grant applicant and IDOE are fulfilled as articulated in the grant applications. INRCIA grant recipients must quarterly report to the IDOE:

- a. the school corporations served;
- b. the numbers and types of school personnel served;
- c. the nature of the improvement activity (i.e. web-based, experiential, embedded);
- d. the outcomes of the activities in relationship to student achievement, systemic compliance, and other SPP /APR indicators;
- e. the outcomes of any activities directly related to developing the capacity to better serve students with disabilities;
- f. the collaborative endeavors with other national and state resource centers; and
- g. other data as requested.

3.2 External Evaluation

Following the first year of implementing INRCIAs, the IDOE will contract with an external evaluator by utilizing the Indiana Department of Administration's (IDOA) Request for Proposal (RFP) process. The selection of the external evaluator will be at the discretion of the RFP

process, as implemented by the IDOA and IDOE. Grant recipients will not participate in the selection of an external evaluator.

All grant recipients will be expected to collaborate with the selected external evaluator in order to evaluate the effects of INRCIAs on student academic achievement.